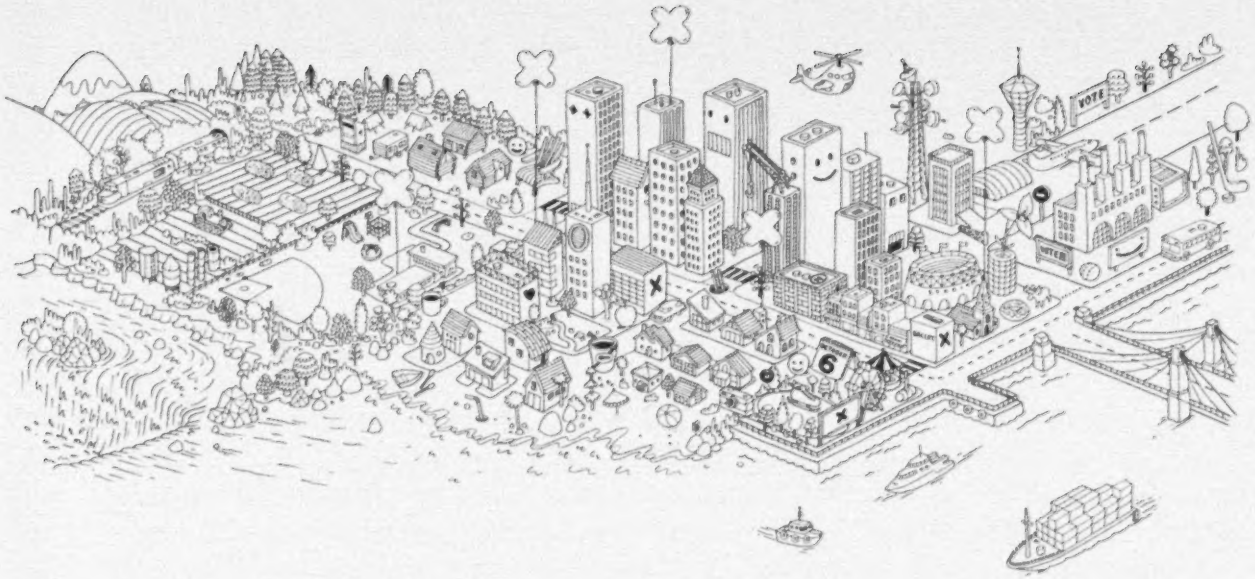

2014 General Provincial Election

Projected Election Cost Estimates

May 7, 2014

Elections
Ontario

Maintaining Election Readiness

Elections Ontario is responsible for administering provincial electoral events in Ontario. Our mission is to uphold the integrity and accessibility of the electoral process and to manage elections in an efficient, fair and impartial manner.

In carrying out our mandate, we must carefully balance protecting the integrity and accessibility of the electoral process with an obligation to use public resources effectively and efficiently. This balance is complicated in an environment where we need to address the logistical realities of potentially having to deliver a non-fixed date general election.

The outcome of the 2011 General Election resulted in no one party holding a majority of seats in Ontario's Legislative Assembly, which means that should the government lose a non-confidence vote or, should a proclamation be issued to dissolve the Legislature, there is the possibility that electors could be called to the polls. While this 'non-fixed date' environment has presented Elections Ontario with substantial challenges, it has also provided us with an opportunity to improve how we manage our business.

Maintaining election readiness while exercising fiduciary restraint has been a valuable learning experience for Elections Ontario. After consultations with Elections Canada and Elections Quebec, agencies that have previously operated under similar circumstances, we determined that we would use our 2011 General Election framework with limited modifications to administer the next election.

Critical election preparation tasks were broken down, re-assembled and ordered based on the amount of lead time required to bring them to completion. If the political situation suggested that there may be an occasion for a vote of confidence, or proclamation for dissolution, decisions were made to 'ramp-up' and start on the tasks associated with a heightened state of readiness.

We created an Event Readiness Program to provide oversight and coordination of integrated event readiness and deployment activities, as well as to complete ongoing performance tracking, event analysis and reporting on event readiness. As we were conducting this planning without knowing for certain the date of the next general election, we established two event readiness dates—one in the spring and one in the fall.

Overview of the 2014 General Election

Ontario will hold its 41st general provincial election on Thursday June 12, 2014.

For the upcoming election, over 9.2 million people will be eligible to cast a ballot. Elections Ontario is responsible for organizing a process that will allow each of these electors, wherever they may be, to vote as conveniently as possible. Whether they choose to vote by mail using special ballots or to make use of assistive voting technology available during certain periods at returning offices, electors have many options to vote. If they choose to vote in person on election day, they can do so in person at the voting location to which they were assigned.

Conducting a provincial election in a province as large and geographically diverse as Ontario presents a number of logistical challenges and requires an incredible amount of planning, building, testing and retesting of processes and systems.

Elections Ontario and the province's 107 Returning Officers establish approximately 25,000 polls in almost 8,200 accessible locations. We also need to secure 107 returning offices and approximately 37 satellite returning offices to administer the election process across Ontario. While we identify and inspect potential locations as part of our ongoing readiness efforts, the final push to secure the locations happens in a very short timeframe once writs of election have been issued.

On election day, Elections Ontario will become one of the largest single employers in the province, when we hire over 70,000 workers for a one day job. Each of these workers needs to be recruited, trained, supervised, evaluated and paid.

Our staff across the province will also need to distribute all of the ballot paper, furniture, computers, voting screens and other supplies that make an election possible. While each Returning Officer was provided with and maintains the supplies essential to the opening of a returning office, we will need to ship additional materials (approximately 60 full tractor trailer loads) to equip the entire province. When the election is over, what remains of those supplies is packaged and returned to Elections Ontario. Here, the process unfolds in reverse as we take custody of the remaining election material.

While all of this work is taking place in the field, the Elections Ontario public call centre will answer approximately 125,000 phone calls in the days leading up to and including election day in a call centre staffed nearly 80 hours a week.

Elections Ontario headquarters will launch a province-wide media campaign to ensure that every Ontarian is aware that an election is taking place and what part they can play in the process. We will ensure that each of the more than 9.2 million electors knows where they can vote and their options for casting a ballot.

Elections Ontario is also responsible for monitoring the financial activities of political parties, constituency associations, candidates, third party advertisers and leadership contestants to ensure that they comply with election finance legislation.

During an election, Elections Ontario will ensure that approximately 650 candidates have their names on the ballot and meet all the legislative requirements of the nomination, registration and endorsement processes.

Elections Ontario will ensure that all stakeholders in the election process know their rights and responsibilities and have the tools they need to exercise them.

Establishing the Projected Election Cost Estimates

The numbers contained in this report represent the best possible estimates. The estimates are built on comparisons to 2011 general election costs, detailed market research and business case analysis.

There are a number of factors that have the potential to impact the estimated cost numbers presented in this report including market forces and outstanding procurement processes.

Market Forces

As mentioned earlier, Elections Ontario will need to rent approximately 8,200 voting locations, 107 returning offices and 37 satellite returning offices. All of these buildings will need to meet Elections Ontario's site accessibility standards. While Elections Ontario will attempt to use the most economical space possible, ultimately, the amount that it will cost to rent the facilities and the steps taken to ensure their accessibility will be subject to market forces that are outside of the control of Elections Ontario.

Projected 2014 General Election Cost Estimates

Elections Ontario estimates that the June 12, 2014 election will cost approximately $90 million. The table below provides a breakdown of the projected election costs.

	2014 General Election Cost Estimate
Headquarters	
Salaries & Benefits	**$3,261,099**
Salaries & Benefits	$3,261,099
Transportation & Communication	**$8,984,050**
Employee Travel	$127,173
Mail, Courier, Telecom	$8,856,877
Services	**$5,541,795**
Consulting (includes Legal)	$5,527,426
Facilities	$14,369
Supplies & Equipment	**$6,842,709**
Furniture & Equipment	$783,458
Supplies & Sundry	$1,048,483
Rentals	$175,656
Advertising & Communication (includes Notice of Registration Card)	$4,835,112
Other Services	**$42,801**
Subtotal Headquarters	**$24,672,454**
Electoral District Field Budget	
Administration of Returning Offices	$17,133,244
Advance Polls	$4,430,549
Polling Day	$18,704,443
Printing	$1,328,480
Revision Personnel	$1,591,360
Special Ballot	$1,771,730
Preliminary Duties	$347,403
Subtotal Electoral District Field	**$45,307,211**
Election Finances	
Audit & Election Subsidies	$5,877,067
Subtotal Election Finances	**$5,877,067**
Maintaining Election Readiness	
Sustaining Readiness Activities	$13,839,866
Ramp Ups	$617,917
Subtotal Maintaining Election Readiness	**$14,457,782**
Totals	**$90,314,514**

In 2011, Elections Ontario spent $79,251,589 on the provincial general election as published in the 2011 – 2012 Elections Ontario annual report.

Conclusion

For the upcoming event, electors will have a number of days and ways in which they may choose to exercise their democratic right to vote. The new processes and systems that Elections Ontario has put in place to meet the needs of a non-fixed date environment have been developed to be as cost-effective as possible. Elections Ontario has balanced the principles of accessibility and integrity to ensure that taxpayer money is used efficiently and effectively.

Elections Ontario believes in continuous improvement. During the 2014 general election, we will collect information and metrics that we will use to evaluate the success of our planning activities. After the event, we will conduct a thorough evaluation of our processes, policies and procedures to document our achievements and shortfalls. The evaluation will be comprised of a "lessons learned" analysis of our activities, a post-event survey and financial expenditure reports. We will report on this evaluation in our 2014 post-event report.